

REMARKS

Applicants concurrently file herewith a Petition and Fee for a Three-Month Extension of Time.

Claims 20, 24, 27, and 33 are all the claims presently pending in the application. Claims 1-4, 8, 11-19, 23, 25-26, and 32 have been canceled. Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication that claims 20, 24, 27, and 33 are allowed. No new matter has been added.

It is noted that the claim amendments herein are made only for more particularly pointing out the invention, and not for distinguishing the invention over the prior art, narrowing the claims, or for any statutory requirements of patentability.

Further, it is noted that, notwithstanding any claim amendments made herein, Applicants' intent is to encompass equivalents of all claim elements, even if amended herein or later during prosecution.

FORMAL MATTERS AND CONCLUSION

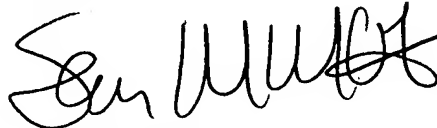
In view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that claims 20, 24, 27, and 33, all the claims presently pending in the application, are patentably distinct over the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner find the application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic or personal interview.

Serial No.: 09/309,768
Docket No. 134960/98
NEC.123

6

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiencies in fees or to credit any overpayment of fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-0481.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sean McGinn", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sean M. McGinn
Registration No.: 34,386

Date:

9/15/04
McGinn & Gibb, PLLC
Intellectual Property Law
8321 Old Courthouse Road, Suite 200
Vienna, Virginia 22182-3817
(703) 761-4100
Customer No. 21254